

votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire, Mr. WARNER, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRAHAM, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

REPUBLICAN CONGRESS HAS
WORKED TIRELESSLY FOR
AMERICA

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, in this pivotal election, the American people will hear a lot of back and forth about who works harder for their country. Shakespeare wrote, "What's past is prologue." And I believe no other phrase can quite describe both the achievements of the Republican Congress and its vision for America's future.

In 1995 when Republicans took over here in the House of Representatives, one of the first orders of business for the new Republican majority was to declare that it was going to comply and be bound by the same laws with which all Americans are forced to comply.

We reformed the bloated, inefficient welfare system which held captive many Americans who only wanted a better life for their families. Providing a welfare-to-work incentive for both individuals and businesses, the Republican-led Congress succeeded in dropping the welfare rolls to the lowest level in history. Congress extended health insurance under the Medicaid program for millions of uninsured children, giving them the proper care and attention that they deserve. The Republicans passed health insurance portability to guarantee working Americans that if they switched jobs or lost their jobs, they could continue with their current health coverage. We reformed the Food and Drug Administration, giving people quicker access to lifesaving drugs and medical devices and providing for better food quality.

The Republican Congress enhanced criminal penalties for sexual crimes against children and established a nationwide tracking system for sexual predators. We also enhanced punishment for drug-induced rape. We boosted education by increasing funding and giving local school districts and States the flexibility to use Federal funds to best meet the needs of children.

For seniors, Mr. Speaker, we passed legislation ending the Social Security earnings limit test which unfairly penalized senior citizens for simply trying to make a living. The House also voted to roll back the 1993 Clinton-Gore tax on Social Security benefits.

We passed legislation to repeal the marriage penalty tax and the estate tax here. Sadly and unfortunately, the President vetoed both our bills and chose to turn his back on millions of Americans. We strengthened our national defense by increasing military pay and retirement benefits, enhancing health care benefits for veterans, providing the care and respect for our military which this administration has misused and forsaken.

And let us not forget the budget, Mr. Speaker. The Republicans passed the Balanced Budget Act and bound our appropriations bills to spending caps. The Nation's checkbook is in the black and we have paid down the debt by nearly \$270 billion.

I would like to point out that the Democrats controlled the White House, the Senate and the House, right here in the 103d Congress. Instead of protecting Social Security, Medicare and providing for prescription drugs, the Democrats succeeded in increasing the Social Security tax on seniors, increasing the tax on gasoline, and increasing the overall tax burden on Americans. At the same time, the Democrats squandered the Social Security surplus. Before 1995, when Republicans took over here, the Democrats spent billions of dollars of the Social Security surplus as if it was a slush fund for Members of Congress.

The Republicans, in sharp contrast, have chosen to lock the Social Security surplus away, making it untouchable for anything except Social Security. Last month, the House passed the debt relief lockbox which will continue our pledge to protect 100 percent of both Social Security and Medicare while providing for \$240 billion in debt reduction.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the Republican Congress has worked tirelessly for the American people. We have produced real solutions here in Congress. We have fought hard and passed legislation on welfare reform, better health care, better education, tougher criminal penalties, tax relief, a stronger defense, a balanced budget, debt reduction, and Social Security protection.

We will not hear that, Mr. Speaker, from the folks on the other side. They refuse to state or admit the facts. They are afraid that the American people will see the truth, so I thought I would come on the floor this morning to set the record straight on the accomplishments of the Republican-led Congress.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gen-

tleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for that introduction.

This represents the bleak future of Social Security. Because of the substantial tax increase on American workers, the FICA tax increase in 1983, there is now more money coming into Social Security than is needed to pay out benefits. And again a reminder that Social Security is a pay-as-you-go program. Current workers pay in their tax and it is almost immediately sent out to current beneficiaries.

Because of the tax increase in 1983, an extra surplus is coming in from the higher tax. After 2015, we go into a bleak future of somehow coming up with the funding necessary to pay benefits.

Let me just comment on this short term surplus. During this surplus over the next 10 years, there is going to be \$7.8 trillion. I know this gets into statistics but bear with me. In the next 10 years, there is going to be \$7.8 trillion coming into the Social Security; \$5.4 trillion is going to be used to pay benefits. That leaves a surplus over the next 10 years in Social Security of \$2.4 trillion.

Governor Bush has suggested that we take \$1 trillion out of that \$2.4 trillion and use it as a transition to set up personal retirement savings accounts. Unlike the Vice President, he is not using the same trillion twice. What he does is take \$1 trillion out of the \$2.4 trillion surplus. Benefits are already going to be paid. There is \$2.4 trillion left over.

In contrast, the Vice President has suggested that we increase spending over the next 10 years by \$2.3 trillion. So he is using that extra money to increase spending. I think in terms of the implication for our kids and our grandkids, it is much better to start solving the Social Security problem than expanding government and making these huge promises of increased spending.

Let me comment briefly on the Vice President's suggestion for saving Social Security. He is suggesting that if we use this extra money coming in in surplus, on- and off-budget a 2nd time we can pay down the debt held by the public. That is \$3.4 trillion. Again the total debt, what we owe Social Security plus the other trust funds combined with the \$3.4 trillion, amounts to a \$5.6 trillion debt that we are going to leave our kids if we do not start paying it down.

So everybody agrees, let us start paying the \$3.4 trillion of debt held by the public, down. But the Vice President is suggesting that somehow paying this \$3.4 trillion down and the savings of the interest that we are paying on this amount, to about \$260 billion a year, it is going to accommodate the shortfall of \$46.6 trillion between now and 2057.

Let me say that again. Mr. GORE is suggesting that if we pay off this \$3.4